

## Frequently Asked Questions about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The FAQs below address Cleveland Clinic's protocols and guidance related to COVID-19. For general questions about COVID-19, [visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)'s website](#).

This document contains questions and answers in the following categories:

[Basics](#)

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Vaccine-related information and FAQs can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 Caregiver Exposure FAQs can be found [here](#).

### Basics

#### **Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19 and how long do they take to appear?**

**A:** Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear two to 14 days after exposure and include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. [CDC will continue to update this list](#) as we learn more.

If you have any of these **emergency warning signs\*** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

\*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

#### **Q: How can I best protect myself and patients?**

**A:** Practice all of the following, even if you have received your COVID-19 vaccine:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay at home.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when in public.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

**Q: What safety precautions are in place at Cleveland Clinic facilities?**

**A:** The safety of our patients and caregivers remains our top priority. As such, several precautions are in place at our facilities, including:

- Screening of patients and permitted visitors for potential COVID-19 symptoms, including a temperature scan.
- Requesting patients and visitors sanitize their hands inside our facilities.
- Requiring visitors to wear a mask at all times while inside our facilities in Ohio and Florida.
- Requiring outpatients and patients in the Emergency Department to wear a mask while inside our facilities in Ohio and Florida.
- Strongly encouraging inpatients to wear a mask while inside our facilities in Ohio and Florida.
- Caregivers will be expected to sanitize hands and follow masking and personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations.
- Reminders for social and physical distancing, and less furniture in our lobbies and waiting areas.
- Continued extensive cleaning of all elevators, door handles and common areas.
- Using four statewide visitation levels – yellow, orange, red and purple – at our Florida and Ohio facilities. The visitation levels are based on data about how COVID-19 is spreading, including state public health information.

### Resources

**Q: What online resources exist for caregivers?**

**A:** You can access COVID-19 information, protocols and other resources from the [COVID-19 toolkit](#) on the intranet, or at [clevelandclinic.org/covid19](http://clevelandclinic.org/covid19), where most COVID-19 toolkit content is replicated and available when you are not connected to the Cleveland Clinic network.

**Q: Is there a specific hotline for caregivers who believe they have COVID-19?**

**A:** Yes, in Ohio, call our Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline at 216.445.8246 if you have symptoms or may have been exposed. Florida caregivers should call 800.546.4149, and Nevada caregivers can call their Occupational Health Department at 702.249.0198.

**Q: How can members of the community in Ohio help with supplies?**

**A:** In response to the Northeast Ohio community's generous requests to provide assistance during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Cleveland Clinic launched a [COVID-19 Community Response Campaign](#).

### Visitation Guidelines

**Q: What restrictions are in place for visitors going to Cleveland Clinic facilities?**

**A:** Visit [www.ClevelandClinic.org/visitation](http://www.ClevelandClinic.org/visitation) to see which visitation guidelines are in place in Ohio and Florida.

Remember, our visitation levels are guidelines and local discretion is necessary to assess whether the ability to maintain social distancing is possible in your areas. Ask visitors to understand that if spacing constraints exist, we may need to redirect them. Contact the Ombudsman office at 216.444.2544 for further support or concerns.

**Q: What is the current visitation level?**

**A:** As of Sept. 14, 2021, Ohio is at level **RED** — [view Ohio details](#). As of Oct. 11, 2021, Florida is at level **ORANGE** — [view Florida details](#).

**Q: How are the visitation guidelines determined?**

**A:** The visitation guidelines are based on data about how COVID-19 is spreading, including state public health information.

**Q: What do visitors need to know?**

**A:** Below is a list of important information for visitors to Cleveland Clinic facilities in Ohio and Florida:

- Visitation hours are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day. Visitors to adult inpatient settings will not be permitted to enter our facilities between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. unless a compassionate exception applies.
- Anyone who is sick, has a fever, tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 20 days, or been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days should not visit or accompany a patient.
- We are still requiring masks upon entering our facilities. Visitors are required to wear a mask, symptom screen and sanitize their hands upon entering our facilities. Masks from home may be worn, or masks will be provided at entrances.
- All visitors to patients with COVID-19 must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow all other safety precautions specific to those units. [View guidelines for visitors to patients with COVID-19](#).
- Visitors must respect SAFE — Six (feet) Away From Everyone — to help keep our community safe from this highly contagious virus.
- If spacing constraints exist, we may need to redirect visitors for their safety and the safety of caregivers and patients.
- Visitors must stay near the patient they are visiting while inside their room. They must not sit at the end of the bed to help maintain physical distancing.

**Q: When in-person visitation is restricted, what are some examples of compassionate exceptions we can make for patients and their families?**

**A:** Compassionate exceptions may apply to inpatients and outpatients. Examples of compassionate exceptions include, but are not limited to, when a patient is:

- Near the end of life
- experiencing a challenging situation, such as a life-changing diagnosis, prolonged hospitalization, limited cognitive abilities, etc.
- having clergy visits and spiritual care needs
- in need of language barrier assistance
- being discharged

**Q: How do we apply compassionate exceptions to visitation for patients in our care?**

**A:** Care team members should work together to look for and offer ways to connect patients to families, if a patient would benefit from such a visit. The nursing unit manager is the best resource to connect with, should such needs arise. If further support or questions with these discussions are necessary, the nursing director or ombudsman can be available to help the team.

Compassionate exceptions must be approved by the nursing unit manager before adding the names of the visitor(s) to the Designated Visitor list in Epic. If a compassionate exception cannot be offered, help patients and loved ones connect virtually and on the phone.

**Q: How can we support patients who are not permitted visitors?**

**A:** Whenever possible, continue to assist patients with virtual visits with their loved ones. [Find guidance here](#).

## Masking

**Q: Which type of mask should I wear? Is it single use or reusable?**

**A:** In the U.S., caregivers are required to wear procedure ear loop masks inside our facilities. Refer to [this visual aid](#) for proper ways to wear your mask. Caregivers should change masks when it is soiled or damaged. Do not wear a cloth mask over a procedure ear loop mask.

**Q: How should I properly dispose of a used ear loop mask?**

**A:** Please dispose of your soiled or damaged mask in the garbage, handling by the ear loop. Wash or sanitize your hands, then put on a new mask.

**Q: Which mask is required to be worn during the care of a patient confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19?**

**A:** All caregivers participating in the care of patients who are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 in any setting must wear a respirator mask (e.g., N95 or PAPR), in addition to a gown, gloves and eyewear (e.g., face shield or goggles).

**Q: Where do you take off your PPE after caring for a patient confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19?**

**A:** Remove PPE upon exiting the patient room or area. You must remove the respirator mask (e.g., N95 or PAPR) last, and it can be removed just prior to exiting, at the room threshold or after exiting. A new ear loop procedure mask needs put on after the respirator mask is removed.

**Q: Who should I contact with specific questions about masking requirements?**

**A:** Speak with your manager for more information or contact [your local Infection Preventionist](#). Questions may be emailed to [Infection\\_Prevention@ccf.org](mailto:Infection_Prevention@ccf.org). You can also refer to the [PPE Recommendations within the COVID-19 toolkit](#) for current information.

**Q: If I have a medical condition that may exempt me from wearing an ear loop mask, how can I apply for an exemption?**

**A:** Submit your request and supporting medical documentation to [covid19@ccf.org](mailto:covid19@ccf.org). You will be notified via email once your request is reviewed.

**Q: Are patients and visitors required to wear a mask?**

**A:** Yes, at all Ohio and Florida locations, all visitors are required to wear a mask at all times while inside our facilities, unless they meet one of the very limited exceptions for health or behavioral conditions that prevents them from wearing one.

At all Ohio and Florida locations, all outpatients and patients in the Emergency Department are required to wear a mask while inside our facilities, unless they meet one of the very limited exceptions for health or behavioral conditions that prevents them from wearing one. Masks from home may be worn, or masks will be provided at entrances.

At all Ohio and Florida locations, inpatients are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while inside our facilities.

**Q: What should I say to patients or fellow caregivers who are not wearing a mask and/or refuse to wear one?**

**A:** Refer to [these tips](#). Communication materials that help caregivers have these compassionate discussions are linked in the COVID-19 toolkit, under the “Caregivers” tab at the “Caregiver Communication Resources” link.

**Q: Do I have to wear a mask in my private office or in meetings?**

**A:** Private spaces where you are alone do not require a mask. Masks should be worn when meeting with others in person.

## Testing

### **Q: What is our testing criteria for COVID-19 at Ohio locations?**

**A:** In Ohio, COVID-19 testing is available for patients who:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to the [COVID-19 toolkit](#) for a list of symptoms)
- Are admitted to the hospital
- Are requiring an overnight stay or admission. [Review this list](#) of surgeries and procedures requiring a COVID-19 test.
- Do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but have had close contact or exposure to someone with COVID-19
- Are requesting COVID-19 testing prior to travel, return to school/college, or childcare

Patients need to be evaluated by a clinician using Cleveland Clinic Express Care Online or in-person, and need a Cleveland Clinic electronic doctor's order to be tested.

### **Q: What is our testing criteria for COVID-19 at Florida locations?**

**A:** At Cleveland Clinic Indian River and Martin Health, anyone over the age of 5 who has COVID-19 symptoms, as defined by the CDC, is eligible for testing.

At Cleveland Clinic Weston, testing is available only for pre-operative patients and caregivers. Florida patients who meet criteria for COVID-19 testing will be given an appointment and directed to the testing location.

### **Q: If I'm a candidate for testing in Ohio, where should I go?**

**A:** There are many Cleveland Clinic COVID-19 testing sites in Northeast Ohio, including at all Express Cares and Urgent Cares in the region. [Click here for a full list](#). Note that an appointment and provider order are required to be tested at a Cleveland Clinic COVID-19 testing site.

Drive-up or on-site testing in Florida is located at the Weston Hospital at Cleveland Clinic Florida's main campus in Weston, Martin North Hospital in Stuart, Martin Health at St. Lucie West in Port St. Lucie and Indian River Hospital in Vero Beach.

### **Q: Do I need an appointment for testing?**

**A:** Yes, patients are tested by appointment only.

### **Q: Is there a rapid test available?**

**A:** Rapid COVID-19 testing is used for patients with high-risk conditions (ED admissions to behavioral health, Intensive Care Unit (ICU), or Labor and Delivery; ED admissions from a congregate living facility; ED admission with cancer/immunosuppression; transplant patients with an active organ offer; or patients undergoing emergent surgery with symptoms) OR admissions from the ED with COVID-19 symptoms.

Rapid testing is also available for those who are symptomatic and having urgent surgery (within 24 hours) and transplant patients with an active organ offer.

### **Q: How do patients get a COVID-19 test if required pre-surgery?**

**A:** Patients scheduled for procedures or surgery requiring admission or overnight stay require a COVID-19 test. All pediatric surgeries and some outpatient procedures also require testing. [Review the full list here](#). If testing is required, the patient will be tested for COVID-19 within three days, or 72 hours, prior to their surgery or procedure date. When a surgery or procedure is scheduled, a COVID-19 test will also be ordered. These patients also have the option of using the [SelfCheck™ COVID-19 Swabbing Kit](#), which allows patients to collect a nasal swab sample at home.

**Q: Where can I learn more about SelfCheck?**

**A:** Visit the [testing section of the COVID-19 toolkit](#) for a caregiver primer and FAQ about SelfCheck. Patients can visit [our SelfCheck website](#) for instructions, FAQs and a list of SelfCheck pick up and drop off sites.

**Q: Can patients get a COVID-19 test at another, non-Cleveland Clinic location for their surgery or procedure?**

**A:** Yes, outside testing is accepted but all patients must have written documentation of their test and results that adhere to the three-day, or 72-hour, testing window.

**Q: How long will results from a COVID-19 test take?**

**A:** For patients in the hospital, and those tested in our Emergency Departments who are considered very ill or at risk, results are available within 24 hours (on average). For patients being tested at our drive-thru facility or a pre-surgical testing location, results are available on average within a few days. Patients are asked to remain at home until their test results are released. Once processed, COVID-19 test results are now available immediately in a patient's MyChart, our secure online health management tool.

**Q: Are we testing hospitalized patients?**

**A:** All hospitalized patients (including those in observation status) in Ohio are tested for COVID-19, including hospital transfers and direct admissions.

**Q: Are we testing patients admitted through the Emergency Department?**

**A:** All admissions through the Emergency Department are tested for COVID-19 utilizing either the rapid or routine test based on patient risk factors and/or symptoms.

Rapid COVID-19 testing is used for patients with high-risk conditions (ED admissions to behavioral health, Intensive Care Unit (ICU), or Labor and Delivery; ED admissions from a congregate living facility; ED admission with cancer/immunosuppression; transplant patients with an active organ offer; or patients undergoing emergent surgery with symptoms) OR admissions from the ED with COVID-19 symptoms.

### Travel

Cleveland Clinic follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for safe domestic and international travel to protect patients, employees, family members and the community from the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Travel restrictions may vary based on whether you are fully vaccinated, not fully vaccinated, or unvaccinated.

Review these FAQs before you travel and contact the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline if you have questions.

### Cleveland Clinic Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline numbers

**Ohio caregivers call 216.445.8246.**

**Florida caregivers call 800.546.4149.**

**Nevada caregivers call 702.249.0198.**

**Q: What travel restrictions exist for caregivers?**

**A:** Cleveland Clinic is restricting all domestic and international business travel through 2021. Please postpone requests to book business travel until this restriction is lifted. However, guidelines updated on April 15, 2021 state that caregivers may be eligible for work-related travel if they are invited to speak at events as a representative of Cleveland Clinic, pending approval. Note that this includes travel in adherence with local, state, national or international guidelines related to the pandemic. [Learn more.](#)

### Domestic Travel

**Q:** What should I do if I plan to travel domestically within the United States?

**A:** Cleveland Clinic follows CDC recommendations for domestic travel (out of state) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Refer to these [domestic travel guidelines](#) and these recommendations for [safe travel by car and air](#). You may be required to contact the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline for a return to work screening before your first scheduled work shift after your travel.

### International Travel

**Q: What should I do if I plan to travel internationally?**

**A:** Cleveland Clinic follows CDC recommendations for safe international travel.

- Refer to these [international travel guidelines](#) and review the [Cleveland Clinic International Travel Arrival Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#) when making plans for a trip.
- Learn more here about [travel recommendations by destination](#).

Travel restrictions vary based on a caregiver's status as fully vaccinated, not fully vaccinated or unvaccinated.

**Q: What determines vaccination status?**

**A:** There are three classifications of vaccination status:

- **Fully Vaccinated:** Two (2) weeks after second dose in a 2-dose series or two (2) weeks after a single-dose vaccine.
- **Not Fully Vaccinated:** Incomplete vaccination series or less than two (2) weeks after 2-dose series or single dose vaccine.
- **Unvaccinated:** No vaccination received.

**Q: What should I do before I depart for the United States?**

**A:** All passengers coming to the United States, **including U.S. citizens and fully vaccinated people, are required** to have a negative COVID-19 test result no more than three (3) days before travel or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past three (3) months before boarding a flight to the United States. [Refer to these guidelines](#).

**Q: What should I do after I arrive in the United States?**

**A:** Upon arrival to the United States, and before their first scheduled work shift, caregivers are required to call the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline to obtain and adhere to the travel health [post-arrival screening requirements and other instructions](#). Restrictions vary based on a caregiver's status as fully vaccinated, not fully vaccinated or unvaccinated.

**Q: What if I recently recovered from COVID-19?**

**A:** Follow these CDC guidelines of what is required for [documentation of recovery](#) after travel.

**Q: Do travel restrictions vary for caregivers vaccinated outside of the United States?**

**A:** Yes. Contact the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline for the steps you should follow.

### Vaccination Status

**Q: What should I do if I am fully vaccinated?**

**A: Fully vaccinated caregivers** must follow these steps before returning to work:

- Upon arrival to the United States, and before their first scheduled work shift, caregivers are required to call the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline to obtain and adhere to the travel health [post-arrival screening requirements and other instructions](#).
- Be tested for COVID-19 **three (3) to five (5) days** after arrival.

- Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.
- Show documentation of full vaccination.

**Q: What should I do if I am not fully vaccinated or unvaccinated?****A: Not fully vaccinated and unvaccinated caregivers** must follow these steps before returning to work:

- Upon arrival to the United States, and before their first scheduled work shift, caregivers are required to call the Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline to obtain and adhere to the [post-arrival screening requirements and other instructions](#).
- Be tested for COVID-19 **three (3) to five (5) days** after arrival.
- Stay home and **self-quarantine** for a full seven (7) days after travel.
  - Caregivers who test negative, must stay home and self-quarantine for the full seven (7) days.
  - Caregivers who test positive, must [isolate](#) to protect others from getting infected. COVID-19 positive caregivers must follow the caregiver workflow for positive COVID-19 tests. Refer to the processes outlined for Ohio, Florida and Nevada caregivers in the [Cleveland Clinic International Travel Arrival Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#).
  - Caregivers who do not get tested, must stay home and **self-quarantine** for **ten (10) days** after travel. They should also self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if symptoms develop.

**Q: What if my family member traveled internationally in the last 14 days?****A:** If your family member traveled internationally in the last 14 days **and** feels sick with any of the COVID symptoms, call your Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline. Your family member should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before they go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about their recent travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- They should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when coughing or sneezing.

Wash hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

**Q: Will I have to take PTO if I am required to self-quarantine?****A:** Talk to your manager about your schedule and refer to the [Attendance, Pay and Benefits section](#) of the Caregiver COVID-19 Exposure FAQs for more information.

COVID-19 vaccinations are encouraged for all Cleveland Clinic caregivers, contractors and vendors. Receiving the vaccine is a personal choice and not a mandate. Learn more about our [caregiver vaccine program](#).



**Additional State and National Resources:**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Ohio Department of Health** - <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/novel-coronavirus/2019-ncov>

**Florida Health** - <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/2019-nCoV/index.html>

**Southern Nevada Health District** - <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus/>

**Additional Global Resources:**

**World Health Organization** - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**Government of Canada** - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>

**Ontario – Ministry of Health** - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

**Public Health England** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>